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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, a Senator from the State of New York.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Our Father and our God, who by Your word spoke the world into being, we acknowledge how little we often care about this world You love so much. We know little of where the world hurts and even less why.

Lord, use our Senators to ease the hurt in our world. As they encounter problems that seem to defy solutions, give them Your wisdom so they will not weary of well doing. May they be slow to anger and abounding in Your steadfast love.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. INOUE).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 15, 2012.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable KIRSTEN E. GILLI-

BRAND, a Senator from the State of New York, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Madam President, following leader remarks, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until noon. The Republicans will control the first 30 minutes, and the majority the second 30 minutes.

At noon the Senate will resume consideration of the Jordan nomination to be a circuit court judge for the Eleventh Circuit. Following that vote, the Senate will resume consideration of the surface transportation bill. There could be additional rollcall votes on amendments to the bill today.

AMERICA'S INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. REID. Madam President, we are here today as a result of stalling by my Republican colleagues. We have a judge for whom the vote was overwhelmingly in his favor. It was 89 for him, with 4 or 5 against him on a motion to proceed. But now we are being forced to eat up 30 hours of valuable time, just sitting around and doing nothing. It is really unfortunate.

We have not confirmed the judge yet because under the rules I have had to file cloture on this noncontroversial judge. After I file cloture, and cloture is invoked, and then the Republicans get 30 hours under the Senate rules. This has happened scores of times—scores of times—during the past year,

all last year, and certainly it is already happening this year. We can't move to anything unless we file cloture.

Early in this Congress, Senators TOM UDALL of New Mexico, MERKLEY of Oregon, and others suggested the rules be changed, and in good faith a number of Senators believed: Well, let's see how the system works if we make a few minor changes—hoping things would get better because they were told they would get better. We were told the other side would not make us file motions to proceed to every piece of legislation that came up. Absolutely untrue. We have virtually had to file cloture on everything. We have wasted weeks of this Congress, months of this Congress, on dilatory tactics.

We have a bill before this body that is so very important, creating 2 million jobs. Is it something that Senator BOXER, the chairman of the committee, and Senator INHOFE, the ranking member, just dreamed up and said let's try something new for a change? No. The legislation allowing us to have a highway system expires at the end of March. So we have to do something.

This isn't something where Senator BOXER said: Well, I think this is a great idea. Her idea is not unique, nor is Senator INHOFE's idea unique. It goes back to when Eisenhower was a major in the Army, and he was asked to bring a caravan of vehicles across the country. He was struck with this idea when he saw that the roads were awful. So after his successful tour of duty in the military and he became President of our country, he decided he wanted to do something about it.

Here is what President Eisenhower did: He got the Congress to appropriate \$50 billion. In today's dollars, that would be \$½ trillion. He got that through Congress. He wanted to build about 50,000 miles of roads in this country so that when another young major was directed to bring military vehicles across the country, he would have roads, highways, and freeways to do

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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